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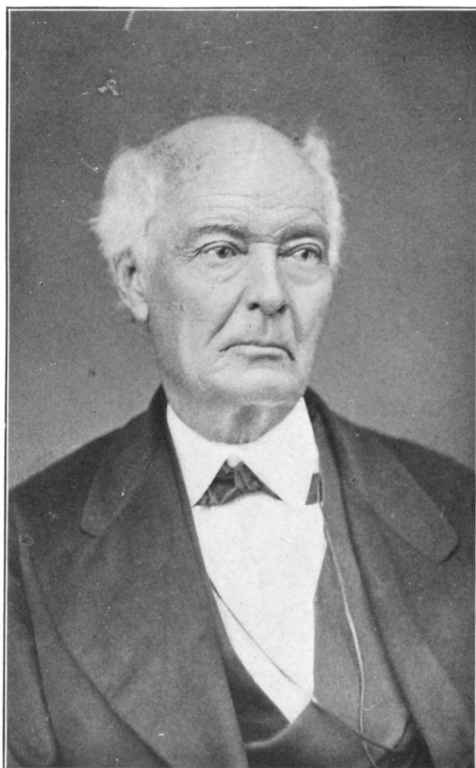
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TWO PIONEER DOCTORS OF STARK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

By WILLIAM R. SANDHAM, Wyoming, Illinois.

Very soon after the early settlements in Illinois began to assume the forms of permanency, even before the pastures were clothed with flocks, or the valleys covered with wheat and corn, there came many needs which were difficult to supply. Among the greatest was the need of qualified physicians. There is a fairly well authenticated tradition that one of the first settlers on Spoon river was a very religious man and who was a strong believer in the efficacy of prayer. He not only believed in prayer but he faithfully practiced it. It was said of him that his prayers were always of the practical kind. He never asked God to do impossible things. Among his petitions to God were many asking for good to come to those early settlements in Illinois. Among them was one asking God to send some good doctors into those settlements, and especially into the one in which he and his family lived. He fervently prayed that the doctors who should be sent into the new Illinois settlements should be good men and devoted to their work, that they should labor for the welfare of the settlements, that they should become life long residents of the communities to which they came, and that their chief aim should be the benefit of the people and not the accumulation of the almighty dollar nor the building of mansions here on earth for themselves alone. The good man also petitioned that the doctors should be accompanied by wives who were well educated, have the love of God and of humanity in their hearts, and that they be interested in the wives and daughters in the settlements. The first doctors who came to the new settlements were not such as were prayed for to come. They were often just the opposite, and they did not stay long. The good man continued to pray and his prayer was finally answered.



DR. THOMAS HALL.

In the year 1837 there came to what is now Stark county, Illinois, Doctor Thomas Hall. Then in the early 40's came Doctor Alfred Castle. Those two doctors fulfilled in nearly every way the hopes and the desires of the praying early settler and his neighbors. Dr. Hall was an Englishman. Dr. Castle was a New York Yankee. Both were skilled in their profession. Both had had considerable practice and they were looked upon as successful physicians. Both brought with them a well selected medical library and a supply of the best surgical instruments at that time obtainable. Their wives were equally as well educated, and they were equally as well qualified to assist in the upbuilding of a pioneer community. Doctors Hall and Castle and their wives were people of character and worth. The hearts of the people with whom they had come to dwell very soon became imbued with this character and worth. Those early settlers became better men and women because they and their families lived among them. They became greatly beloved and respected by all the people, and they loved and respected the people whom they faithfully served. Doctors Hall and Castle were greatly devoted to their work. They were good advisers, kindhearted and unselfish. Their aim was not how much they could gain, but how much good they could do. Their services were cheerfully given to rich and poor alike. Financial rewards came not into their minds. In the early days their patients consisted of the pioneers living twenty miles and more east and west of, and from twenty to thirty miles up and down Spoon river, Dr. Hall on the west side and Dr. Castle on the east side. Their practice was large but not over profitable, and neither became rich. It has been related that Dr. Hall's family and friends often suggested to him that he should give more attention to the collection of what was due for his services, and he would turn away with a smile, saying "Don't bother me about such trifles. I am laying up treasures in Heaven." A present day writer can give but a faint idea of the benefits those early day doctors bestowed on the pioneers, or what they meant to those early day communities. We often wonder why those pioneer doctors should leave their homes in old and well established communities, and come to

live with our early settlers in the conditions which prevailed in this part of our state between the years 1835 and 1855. We can only conjecture that some of them at least came in answer to the prayers of that good early settler.

Dr. Thomas Hall, son of Thomas and Sarah (Cokayne) Hall, was born near Hulland in Derbyshire, England, March 12, 1805. He was educated in one of the high grade grammar schools in Derbyshire. He studied medicine and surgery under the tutorship of a Dr. Coleman of Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England. He graduated as a doctor of medicine and surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, in 1828. Among the names on his diploma were those of Sir Astley Cooper and Dr. John Abernethy, two of the best known physicians and surgeons in England at that time. When the young Dr. Hall was leaving home to begin life and practice for himself, his good mother followed him to the gate, and laying her hands lovingly on his shoulder said to him "Tom, do your duty by all, but especially remember the poor." Dr. Hall was actively and successfully engaged in the practice of his profession in his native county for ten years. He was married to Miss Matilda Manifold, who was born and reared in Findern, Derbyshire, England, May 14, 1829, just a few days before the Isaac B. Essex family became the first settlers of what is now Stark county, Illinois.

In the year 1837, nearly two years before Stark county, Illinois, was created, Dr. Thomas Hall, accompanied by his wife and four children, his father and mother, his sister, Mrs. Harvey, her husband and five children, left his native land and sought a new home in the United States of America, the land of promise. Dr. Hall's mother was overcome by sea sickness on the Atlantic ocean and died a few days before the ship reached New York. The body was reverently lowered to the surface of the sea and the water silently closed over it. Dr. Hall and family, his sorrowing father, his sister and family arrived in Peoria, Illinois, July 4, 1837. They came by boat by way of the Hudson river, the Erie canal, and Lake Erie to Cleveland, Ohio, thence by boat on a canal to the Ohio river, thence by boat on the Ohio, Mississippi, and Illinois rivers. Peoria was then only a hamlet on the lake.



MRS. MATILDA M. HALL.

They came from Peoria to Wyoming, a village of only a few families which was laid out by General Samuel Thomas the year before, in wagons drawn by horses. From Wyoming they were conveyed in wagons drawn by oxen to Osceola, a village which was laid out in 1835 by a Major Robert Moore, in the northeast part of what is now Elmira Township in Stark county, Illinois. Here they were heartily welcomed by two brothers and a sister of Dr. Hall, who had come from England the year before. Dr. Hall, assisted by his brothers and his father, built a log cabin for his family including an office for himself in the new village of Osceola, and began the practice of his profession without delay. It was in this cabin, September 3, 1840, that Dr. and Mrs. Hall's son Walter Thomas was born, who "when age began to tire" became his father's professional successor.

On July 6, 1842, Dr. Hall and his family moved to the village of Toulon, which was made the county seat of Stark county in May, 1841. Here he continued to practice his profession until the infirmities of old age incapacitated him for the work of a physician. Dr. Hall became so favorably known in Illinois as a skilled physician, that on February 7, 1850, the faculty of Rush Medical College of Chicago conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine. Dr. and Mrs. Hall's daughter Louisa, born March 23, 1843, married John C. Emery a son of a Stark county pioneer, was the first white child born in Toulon. Mrs. Hall was endowed with a remarkable mental acuteness, and was greatly beloved by her family and her many friends. She died at her home in Toulon, August 8, 1874, in the seventy second year of her age, leaving a memory enshrined in the hearts of the pioneers of Stark county and their children. Dr. Thomas Hall died at the home of his son, Dr. Walter Thomas Hall, in Toulon, December 20, 1876. His body was followed to his grave by the respect of his neighbors and the blessings of all who knew him. Only a few days before his death he said to some of his friends, "I am not afraid to meet my mother, for she knows that I have done as she told me." With his heart fully satisfied he trusted in God for the rest.

Eliza, the eldest daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Hall, married Martin Shallenberger one of the early day lawyers of Stark county. She wrote a history of Stark county, which she named "Stark County and Its Pioneers." It was published in 1876, a few months before the death of her father. It is considered by good judges to be the best history of Stark county which has so far been written. It has become a classic among the many county histories in Illinois. Copies of it are in all the public libraries in Stark county, in the Chicago Historical Library and in the Illinois State Historical library in Springfield.

Doctor Alfred Castle, son of Samuel and Phebe Castle, was born in Sullivan, Madison county, New York, September 26, 1806. He was a cousin of Colonel Ethan Allen of Fort Ticonderoga fame. His father who was a native of Berkshire county, Massachusetts, was a descendant of a Castle family that came from Ireland sometime before the American revolution and settled in Connecticut. Dr. Castle's mother's family name was Parmalee. Her ancestors came to the United States from Belgium.

Dr. Castle was educated in the common schools of the state of New York and at a high class seminary in Cazenovia, New York. Later he was a student for several terms at Vermont College in Woodstock, Vermont, and at Harvard College now Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He studied medicine in a physician's office in Monroe county, New York, and at medical schools in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at the Massachusetts Hospital in Boston. He received the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1834. He practiced in Monroe county, New York, for two years.

Dr. Castle was married May 19, 1835, to Miss Maria Persis Dana, a daughter of Colonel Daniel Dana, who was commander of a Vermont regiment during the War of 1812. Colonel Dana was a grandson of General Israel Putnam, one of the most noted officers in the Revolutionary war, after whom Putnam County, Illinois, was named. The Dana family came to America from the part of France called Normandy. Mrs. Castle was born in Woodstock, Vermont, November 8,



DR. ALFRED CASTLE.



MRS. ALFRED CASTLE.

1813. She received an excellent education in the public schools and at Vermont College in her native place.

In June, 1836, Doctor and Mrs. Alfred Castle left the state of New York, and came to Peoria, Illinois, making the journey in a one horse buggy. Soon after arriving at the then small but very ambitious village, Dr. Castle began the active practice of his profession in which he was ably assisted by Mrs. Castle. During a scourge of yellow fever which soon after prevailed in Peoria and vicinity, so great were the services of Dr. and Mrs. Castle that they became affectionately known as "the people's friends" and many times were "God bless you" poured upon them.

In the early part of 1842, a short time before Dr. Thomas Hall and family moved to Toulon, Dr. and Mrs. Castle with two children moved to Wyoming, then a very small village in Stark county, Illinois, where they made their home until the time of their death between forty-five and fifty years later. Soon after coming to Stark county, Dr. Castle resumed the practice of medicine, which he continued almost to the end of his long and useful life. About a year after his coming to Stark county, Dr. Castle bought a three cornered piece of land eighty rods northeast of what was then the village of Wyoming, containing about fifteen acres, for which he paid one hundred dollars. At the time of Dr. Castle's death that piece of land was a part of the city of Wyoming and was covered with good and substantial residences. The home which the Castles built on that piece of land was one of the landmarks of Stark county for a great many years.

Dr. Castle was greatly interested in public improvements, and to him much credit is due for his constant and faithful endeavors in the development and progress of Wyoming and Stark county. It was largely through his efforts that the Buda and Rushville branch of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad was built into Wyoming. He was very much interested in the public schools and the churches. He gave a block of land for one of the Wyoming Schools. He also gave a lot for Saint Luke's Episcopal church and a lot for Saint Dominic's Catholic church, both in Wyoming.

Dr. Castle died in the home in which he lived for over forty years, November 10, 1888. His body like that of Dr. Thomas Hall, was followed to his grave by the respect of his neighbors and the blessings of all who knew him. Mrs. Castle died at the home in Wyoming, February 26, 1892. Mrs. Marian C. Klock, a friend and neighbor for twenty-five years, who wrote her obituary at the time of her death, said of Mrs. Castle: "Her residence amid the solitudes and privations of a new country did not rob her of the graces of a cultured christian lady. Regard for the good of others was a prominent characteristic of her nature, and many will cherish her memory and her numberless deeds of kindness."